

CHAPTER IV

OUTSIDE INFLUENCES UPON MAGUGU

Europeans, Government officials, and the Great North Road have had marked effects upon the Magugu community.

The Europeans.--The presence of European farmers in the area, most of whom antedate the present Magugu community, has affected the pattern of settlement, has served as an example of better agriculture, and has contributed to the cash income of the African farmer.

The first European farmer to come to Magugu was Mr. George Combos, who had visited the area on hunting trips and realized its agricultural potential. In 1935 Mr. Combos started his present farm, Agriola Estate, and is today still operating that farm with the aid of a manager. Since 1935 there has been, at various times, from six to nine non-African estates at Magugu and six estates at Dudumera as well. All are European operated except two that are Asian. The story of this European settlement has been one of continual struggle, failures, heartbreak, and qualified success today. It has been a story of repeated crop failures as cotton was replaced by coffee, which in turn was replaced by paw paws and corn. The history of the Magugu Europeans, which must await a detailed study, would reveal a continued battle against the rapidly growing bush, wild animals, crop pests and blights, and disease. Many of these battles

lost, and perhaps the best example is the abandonment of Sino Estate by Mr. Gritzalis. Sino was at one time a flourishing plantation with beautiful trees and flowers lining the approach to the farm site (Fig. 135). Repeated crop failures and the early death of Gritzalis from black water fever finally forced the closing down of Sino. Gritzalis' son still lives at Sino but operates Marios Estate instead, where better soils and drainage have enabled a more successful operation.

Other plantations, such as Kristina Estate operated by Mr. Apokides, are today model farms with beautiful homes and fields. On these estates good farming practices are producing excellent quality corn, coffee, paw paws, sisal, beans, and garden vegetables. Through experience the European has learned to get the maximum returns from his soil. Multi-storied agriculture, such as beans and paw paws, or inter-tillage, such as coffee and paw paws, enable the farmer to take advantage of seasonal crops while still maintaining long term crops on the same land (Figs. 136 and 137). In addition wise use of the water resources of the area assures a good crop even though the rains fail, as they so often do at Magugu (Figs. 138 and 139).

Because many of the European raised crops require great amounts of labor, the labor forces on the European estates are large in proportion to the acres farmed. Kristina Estate hires two hundred workers to maintain its



Fig. 135.--The Gritzalis home at Sino. Formerly a flourishing estate, this farm has now been abandoned and is reverting to bush. The owner continues, however, to live here while farming one of the Magugu estates.



Fig. 136.--Mature paw paw trees. The soil has been disked once and will be gone over again in preparation for a crop of beans between and beneath the trees.



Fig. 137.--European cultivation at Kristina Estate. Beans have been planted beneath the paw paw trees.

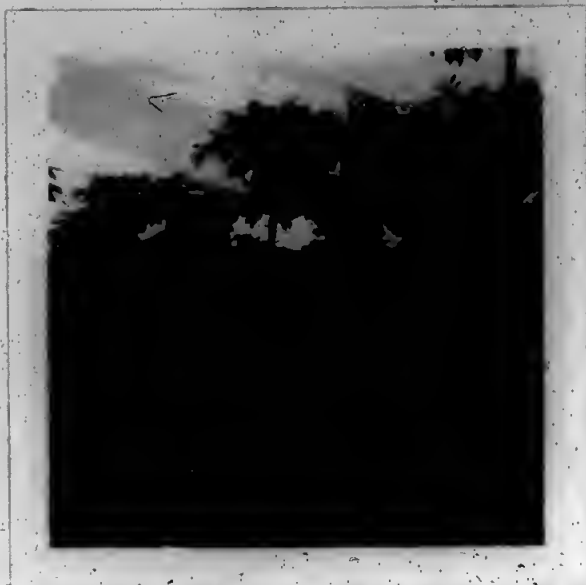


Fig. 138.--Coffee and paw paws on a European estate. The author is standing in one of the many irrigation ditches that serve the field.



Fig. 139.--The beginning of a private European irrigation ditch. From where it leaves the Dudumera River, the water must travel over two miles before it reaches the fields of the owner. To the right is the Dudumera River.

five hundred acres, and the other estates hire laborers in proportion to their developed size. In the case of specialty crops, such large labor forces are needed, not so much because of lack of mechanization on the farms, but because of the nature of the crops raised. Hence, those estates concentrating on paw paw need many laborers to tap the melons (a daily process), collect the pectin, carry it to the drying sheds, and gather wood to maintain the fires needed to dry the pectin (Figs. 140 and 141). Coffee estates still must depend on hand labor to pick the coffee beans and dry them (Fig. 142). Similarly sisal estates employ hundreds to cut the sisal by hand, put it through the decorticating mill, spread it for drying, and bale it for shipment (Figs. 143, 144, 145 and 146). Even those estates concentrating on corn production need larger labor forces than would be used elsewhere to produce this crop, since most of the work involved in this crop is still manual (Fig. 147).

In general, the large labor forces on the Magugu estates, though sometimes necessary for the production of the many specialized crops raised, reflect the lack of much mechanization on these farms. Although every European estate in the area uses a tractor or tractors for some part of its farming operations, most expensive machines find hard competition from an African laborer who is willing to work for twenty shillings a month. Hence, it is a rare farmer who uses a mechanical corn planter for his corn crop. Instead of investing in a planter and the gasoline power



Fig. 140.--Tapping paw paws on a European estate.



Fig. 141.--A drying shed for paw paw pectin. The tray in the doorway contains pectin which is dried by heat entering from beneath the tray. The bricks of this building were dried and baked at Magugu, and the building was constructed by local African labor.



Fig. 142.--Coffee drying trays on Kristina Estate. The drying and sacking of coffee is done by hand.

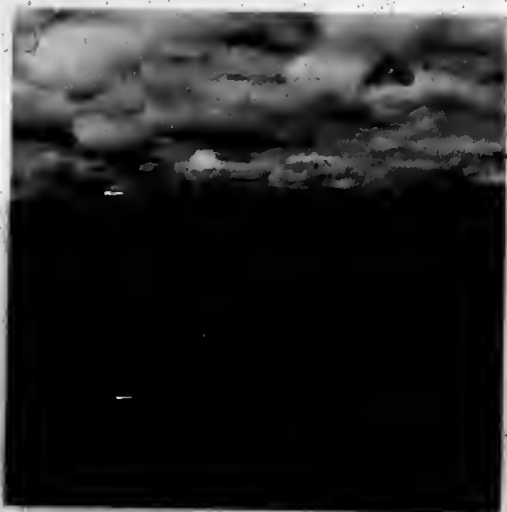


Fig. 143.--A young field of sisal. The sisal is nearly ready for its first cutting.



Fig. 144.--Putting sisal through the decortivating machine on a European estate.



Fig. 145.--A closeup of a decortivating plant. This machine was constructed from odds and ends by a local European.



Fig. 146.--Sisal drying. In the background are mango trees growing on the site of a former European farmstead.



Fig. 147.--European-owned corn. This field, just ripening, will yield over eighty bushels an acre. Because of a failure of the January and February rains it had to be irrigated three times. The crop was planted, cultivated, and irrigated by hand.

needed to operate it, he hires a few more laborers, who plant by hand. Instead of using trucks or wagons to carry crops to central processing stations, the crops are carried upon the heads and backs of Africans. Instead of constructing and maintaining irrigation ditches by machine, they are built and tended with pick and shovel.

Not only do the Europeans at Magugu hire large numbers of African workers, but also the Dudumera estates bordering Magugu on the south have even larger labor forces. Because the Dudumera estates are mechanized only to the same degree as the Magugu estates, and because they are larger in area than the Magugu farms they, of necessity, hire greater numbers of workers. The Magugu-Dudumera area has a small supply of men willing to work for Europeans, and therefore most of the labor is brought into the area under contract with the Labor Department of the Territorial Government. These aliens are recruited throughout the Territory by the Government labor officers. Their transportation to Magugu is paid by the European farmer, and the employer agrees to house and feed the laborers during their term of contract. Generally the housing provided for these laborers is of shockingly bad quality (Figs. 148 and 149). Walls of the labor huts often are in disrepair, filth is allowed to accumulate both inside and outside the dwelling, and overcrowding is the rule rather than the exception. The food provided is monotonous

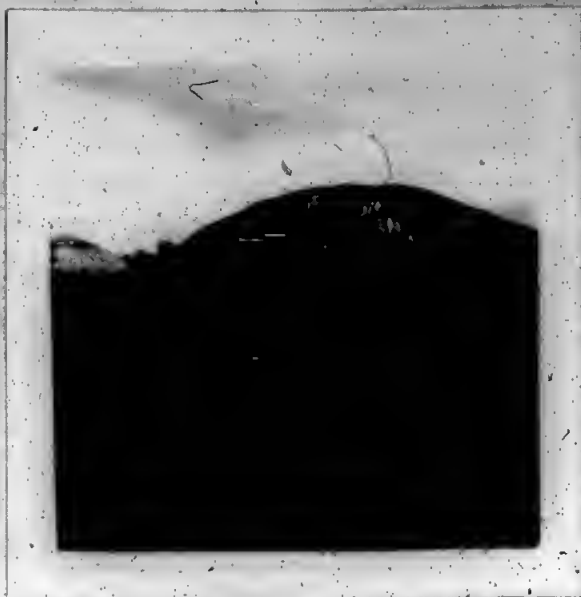


Fig. 148.--Housing provided by Europeans for African labor.



Fig. 149.--A dwelling provided for contract labor on Agriola Estate. Sections of the front wall have crumbled, trash has accumulated around the house, and a crude job of re-thatching has not been trimmed at the edges.

and consists nearly entirely of posho (ground corn). Wild game is occasionally shot and the meat given to the workers, but this is a rare occurrence.

It is not strange, therefore, that the contract laborer in the Magugu area is usually dissatisfied with his lot. His poor housing, monotonous diet, low wages, and bachelor existence cause him to look beyond his surroundings for a better life. At Magugu he sees the small independent farmer who appears to be in better circumstances than himself. He sees plenty of vacant land waiting to be occupied. Often he will begin the process towards independence by tilling a small plot of ground at Magugu while still working and living on a European farm. With the savings from this first venture he sometimes is able to terminate his labor at the end of the contract and set himself up as an independent operator. Even after he acquires his own house and farm, he may continue to work on European farms on either a part of full time basis, depending upon his spare time to care for his own crops. Once he has acquired enough assets for a bride he will marry and can then rely upon his wife to till his fields while he continues his outside employment. Under such an arrangement the family is assured a food supply through the labors of the wife and a cash income from the husband's outside employment.

Many of the present settlers at Magugu are those who have made the transition from a contract laborer to that of

an independent farmer. Their influence upon the land use pattern of the community has been great, for they bring with them the skills of many tribes who live at great distances. Most would never have come to the area had their transportation not been paid and had they not been assured of a job before they left their homes. Although many had never planned to remain at Magugu, many have done so and are happy in their new situation.

Not only are a wide variety of skills brought into the community by alien contract labor, but new farming techniques learned on the European farms are also introduced. All the European farms have elaborate private irrigation systems, and many Africans acquire the ability to irrigate during their work on these farms. The need to combat weeds and pests is impressed upon them by European managers, and such lessons are not wasted in their own farming operations. The making of bricks and better house construction are also learned and are reflected in some of the better houses built in Magugu.

A large number of laborers are employed as domestics, and many of these are given their first lessons in sanitation and hygiene by their European employers. The wants of these domestics are broadened by their employment and leads to a desire for a higher standard of living than they previously had. This is reflected by a class of farmer at Magugu who will work harder to acquire better clothing, a

bicycle, a radio, or better furnishings in his house.

Many of the European influences are subtle and not easily observed, but they exist, and in general Magugu is better off because of them.

Government officials.--The impact of the Government upon a community in Tanganyika is nowhere greater than in Magugu, for without Government assistance Magugu would never have come into existence in 1943 (see Chapter I). Since 1943, Government officials have maintained a lively interest in this community. Henry Fosbrooke, the father of the initial clearance project, continues to visit Magugu and offers suggestions for its betterment. Agricultural and resettlement officers of the Mbulu District make periodic stops at Magugu. The condition of crops is observed, new seed varieties introduced, new crops suggested, and experimental plots such as rice paddies are used to teach improved farming methods. All this does not mean that the individualism of the farmer is suppressed. Rather it implies that suggestions and examples are offered in the hopes that they will be of some use to the community. Like any farming community, the farmers at Magugu are conservative and slow to change. Time and patience are commonly necessary in putting across new ideas to them.

Through the efforts of the District Education Officer, a school was finally built at Magugu in 1954. For the first time an attempt is being made to combat

Magugu's high illiteracy rate. Many of the tribes represented at Magugu are extremely keen for educational opportunities for their children, and it will be of interest to observe what influence the school will have upon the community in the future. When the Education Officer was preparing to leave the District in 1954 for his long leave in England, the whole Magugu community turned out to give him a farewell party. Africans, Asians, and Europeans organized together to provide a banquet and celebration under one roof. Neighboring chiefs, Asians from as far away as Arusha, and Europeans from farms covering a wide area came to the celebration. Without the catalyst provided by an excellent District Education Officer this display of interracial cooperation, the first of its kind at Magugu, might never have happened.

Other Government officials also visit Magugu. In 1954, the Assistant Livestock Officer demonstrated a chemical sprayer to be used for killing animal and human parasites. He convinced the Native Treasury to buy cooperatively such a sprayer for the use of the whole community. The proper use of such a simple device should aid greatly in improving not only the herds of Magugu but also human health as well.

The District Commissioner frequently comes to Magugu on administrative matters. In controversial legal matters, in disputes between Africans and Europeans, in supervising

taxes and Native Treasury funds, and in a wide variety of other matters his influence is felt. He also takes a healthy interest in such academic matters as research field workers and lends his whole-hearted support to such projects.

On the Provincial level, Magugu is being increasingly visited by officials who are interested in the development of the whole Rift Valley area. Ornithologists stop here to study the bird life which is so destructive to the crops of the Province. Tsetse fly researchers, who have been in the area for years, are continuing their work. Land officials, interested not only in African cultivation but also in such problems as the reclamation of Kiru or the development of sugar cane in the valley, have recently had the area photographed from the air.

All these visits by Government officials leave their imprint on the community: a school is built; a water supply provided for the dispensary; new seeds and crops introduced; outbreaks of sleeping sickness checked; or law and order maintained by the police. Continued Government help and interest will be reflected in the advances made by the Magugu community.

The Great North Road.--Much has been said throughout this study about the inadequacies of the highway system that serves Magugu. Although these inadequacies are quite real, nevertheless it should not be overlooked that Magugu, located on the Great North Road, is on the main north-south

highway of the Territory. As a result Magugu is accessible most of the year to vehicular traffic of some kind, a privilege denied many African communities in Tanganyika. The influence of this highway expresses itself in many ways upon the community. There is a daily bus service, and the long stops of the bus at Magugu permit the exchange of news from the rest of the Territory. Important messages from Arusha, machine replacements, temporary supplies, and good hospitals are only a day or two away by bus when the road is open. Nevertheless, the lack of good highways remains one of the big obstacles to the advancement of Magugu. Fosbrooke stated well the problem in 1944:

...the main difficulty experienced...is in handling and transporting the crop. If each planter has to purchase gunny bags, arrange storage pending transport and pay maximum two way transport to rapacious contractors little progress will be made.¹

The situation described in this letter still prevails today, and until this problem of good transportation is solved Fosbrooke's prediction that "little progress will be made" holds true.

¹From an unpublished letter from Fosbrooke to the Senior Agricultural Officer at Moshi, Tanganyika, dated October 11, 1944.